

Message Text

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70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7238

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KINGSTON 1146

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, JM

SUBJECT: POLITICAL VIOLENCE FLARES IN KINGSTON GHETTO

REF KINGSTON 309

1. THERE HAS BEEN A MARKED INCREASE IN THE INCIDENCE OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE KINGSTON GHETTO SINCE THE RANSACKING OF JLP HEADQUARTERS IN LATE JANUARY (REFTEL). A NEW HIGH POINT WAS REACHED MARCH 23. EIGHT PERSONS WERE WOUNDED BY GUNFIRE WHEN A FUNERAL PROCESSION FOR A SLAIN PNP SUPPORTER AND REPUTED GUNMAN, WHICH WAS LED BY PM MANLEY AND OTHER PNP LEADERS, WAS ATTACKED.

2. MANLEY REACTED TO THE ATTACK BY CALLING AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF SENIOR SECURITY PEOPLE AT JAMAICA HOUSE LAST NIGHT "TO CONSIDER WHAT STEPS ARE NECESSARY TO BE TAKEN TO STAMP OUT THE GUN VIOLENCE WHICH IS BEING REINTRODUCED INTO JAMAICAN POLITICS FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1966". MANLEY LABELED THE ATTACK FOR THE PRESS AS "A BLATANT ACT OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE AIMED AT ME, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET, MEMBERS OF THE PNP, SYMPATHIZERS AND MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY OF THE DECEASED".

3. COMMENT: THE CURRENT SPATE OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE WILL
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NOT ABATE UNTIL PM MANLEY AND OPPOSITION LEADER SEAGA

AGREE TO RESTRAIN THEIR SUPPORTERS AND/OR THE POLICE ARE GIVEN A FREE HAND TO GO AFTER THE PERPETRATORS OF THE VIOLENCE. THE PROGNOSIS IS NOT GOOD. BOTH LEADERS APPEAR MORE INTENT ON PINNING THE BLAME ON THE OTHER, THAN ARRANGING A TRUCE. THE POLICE MEANWHILE ARE HESITANT TO TAKE ANY INITIATIVES WHICH WILL PLACE THEM IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FIGURATIVE AND LITERAL CROSSFIRE.

4. MOST OF THE VIOLENCE IS CENTERED IN THE TIVOLI GARDENS SECTION OF WEST KINGSTON, A LOW-COST HOUSING PROJECT AREA BUILT UNDER THE LAST JLP GOVERNMENT AND INHABITED BY FERVENT SEAGA SUPPORTERS. THE VIRTUALLY EXCLUSIVE ALLOCATION OF HOUSING TO PNP SUPPORTERS IN NEW PROJECTS ON THE FRINGES OF TIVOLI GARDENS, AND EVEN INTO VACANCIES IN THE OLDER PROJECT, BY MINISTER OF HOUSING SPAULDING IS VIEWED BY MANY AS AN ATTEMPT TO DILUTE SEAGA'S STRENGTH IN WEST KINGSTON, AND IS CONSIDERED THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE RECENT VIOLENCE. GERARD

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